



# LINCOLN'S FOREBODINGS OF DEFEAT AT THE POLLS

(LINCOLN IN THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE—IV)

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1861-1866

## LINCOLN'S MANNER CONTRASTED WITH STANTON'S

SECRETARY STANTON'S private secretary, Major A. E. H. Johnson, in conversation with the writer in April, 1907, said that in his dealings with the public, Lincoln's heart was greater than his head, while Stanton's head was greater than his heart. This characterization, though general, contains a great deal of truth. But we must not forget that the crystallized opinion of the present generation is that on all the important questions of public policy and administrative action, where Stanton's views were opposed to those of Lincoln, the latter dominated his energetic war secretary. Indeed, one of Lincoln's latest biographers has entitled his volume "Lincoln, Master of Men," and has marshaled facts and documents that seem to demonstrate that on all essential points Lincoln's will was stronger than Stanton's.

In fact, during the three and a quarter years of their close official relations the two men worked in almost entire harmony. There never appeared, to the writer's observation, any real conflict between them. It suited both to treat the public, each in his own characteristic way, and when in any case the pinch came, each knew how far to yield to the other without sacrifice of prerogative.

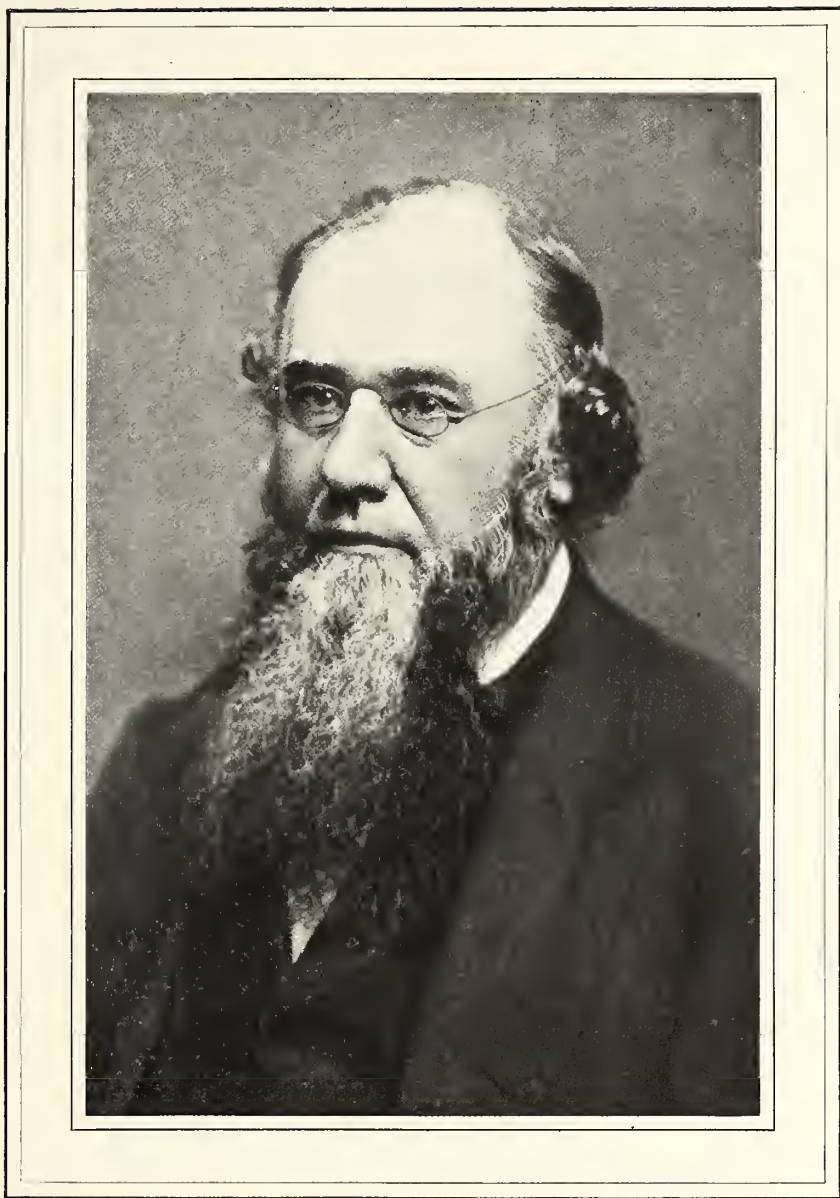
One incident may be cited to show the general characteristics of the two men. The scarcity and very high price of cot-

ton, especially toward the end of the war, had the effect of leading many Northerners to engage in the questionable work of buying up cotton through certain agencies in the border States with the resultant effect of supplying needed funds to the South and establishing lines of communication which were used in many cases for conveying military information to the enemy. Accordingly, the War Department issued stringent orders on this subject which were, of course, criticized by the cotton speculators; one of whom, about May, 1864, appealed to President Lincoln for the purpose of inducing him to overrule Stanton's order in his particular case and allow a large amount of cotton, already bought and paid for, to come through our lines. Lincoln heard the man's story and declined to intervene, but upon being further importuned gave his autograph card with an introduction to Stanton. The man went over to the War Department, presented his card, and told his story, whereupon Stanton tore up the President's card and threw it into the waste-basket, and said, "The orders of this Department will not be changed."

The speculator, who was a man of considerable prominence, immediately went back to the White House and told of his reception by Stanton, using strong language and censuring the Secretary of War severely.

"Mr. President," said he, "what do you think Stanton did with your card?"

"I don't know," said Lincoln, "tell me."



Half-tone plate engraved by H. Davidson

*Edwin M. Stanton*

SECRETARY OF WAR 1862-1868

Mr. C. P. Filson, son of the photographer, writes that this portrait is from the last negative of Stanton, which was taken by his father, Davison Filson, while Stanton was stumping Ohio for General Grant in the Presidential canvass of 1868.

"He tore it up and threw it into the waste-basket. He is not a fit man to be your Secretary of War."

"Did he do that?" replied Lincoln; "well, that's just like Stanton."

In the afternoon, in the presence of Major Eckert, the President gave the Secretary of War an account of the incident, evidently with great enjoyment, and without taking the slightest exception to Stanton's course.

There was a marked contrast between Lincoln's manner, which was always pleasant and even genial, and that of Stanton. The latter's stern, spectacled visage commanded instant respect and in many cases inspired fear. In receiving visitors, and they were legion, Stanton seldom or never sat down, but stood before a high desk as the crowd passed before him and one by one presented their requests or complaints, which were rapidly disposed of. He was haughty, severe, domineering, and often rude. When I think of him in the daily routine of his public audiences, the characterization of Napoleon by Charles Phillips, the Irish orator, comes to mind: "Grand, gloomy, and peculiar."

The almost overwhelming burden of the great struggle for the life of the nation was ever pressing upon Stanton's heart and brain, and he even begrudged the time which he believed was wasted in ordinary civilities and was impatient with every one who failed to show like zeal and alertness with himself. He was not blessed with Lincoln's happy faculty of story-telling or exchanging badinage, which to the latter was a God-given means of relief from the awful strain to which he was subjected. And yet there were times when even Stanton would soften and when he would disclose a kindly nature, the knowledge of the possession of which would come as a sharp surprise to any one fortunate enough to be present on such an occasion.

One instance in my recollection occurred after what seemed to me an unusual outburst of temper visited upon my innocent head. This was in connection with the receipt of the sensational Sherman-Johnson Peace Agreement which reached Washington on April 21, 1865,

(only six days after Lincoln's death), the contents of which were of such an extraordinary character as to cause Stanton to become intensely excited. In fact, every high official of the Government, not excluding General Grant, was amazed at Sherman's action in signing such an agreement. I have been informed on trustworthy authority that President Johnson at the historical conference on the evening of April 21, in Senator Hooper's house,<sup>1</sup> after hearing Stanton read over his "Nine Reasons why the Sherman-Johnson Agreement should be rejected by the Government," remarked that Sherman was a traitor.

In preparation for this hastily called cabinet meeting, Stanton called me in from the cipher-room and asked me to write from his dictation, the regular clerical staff of the secretary's office having gone home for the day. Although as a telegrapher I was a rapid penman, my task was not an easy one, for the great war secretary's sentences came tumbling from his lips in an impetuous torrent and it was impossible for me to keep up the pace he set. In fact, even a shorthand writer would probably have stumbled, so that breaks were frequent and equally annoying to both of us. I did my level best, but lost some words and transposed others, so that the fiery dictator was forced to go back several times in his train of thought and reconstruct sentences, and in doing so he here and there used phrases different from those in his original composition. The final result was therefore unsatisfactory, and Stanton in his eagerness snatched the manuscript from my hands, with some remarks that would not look well in print.

Taking a pen in his hand and dipping it vigorously into the inkstand he proceeded to rewrite a considerable part of the document himself. Having done this, he read it over to me carefully and then had me write a new copy entire, while he paced back and forth across the room impatient of the fast-speeding minutes, and occasionally looking over my shoulder to see how far I had progressed. At last the final copy was ready, and I handed it to him and started to go into the cipher-room adjoining, when he called me back

<sup>1</sup> President Johnson had not yet moved into the White House. The Hooper house was later altered into a hotel—the Shoreham.

and placing his hand affectionately on my shoulder, said, "I was too hasty with you, Mr. Bates. The fault was mine in expecting you to keep up with my rapid dictation; but I was so indignant at General Sherman for having assumed to enter into such an arrangement with the enemy, that I forgot everything else. I beg your pardon, my son."

Another incident occurs to my mind, showing how very thin was the outer crust of his harsh manner and how readily at times it could be broken so as to reveal the inherent kindness of his heart.

One evening, in the summer of 1864, I rode out to the Soldiers' Home with important despatches for the President and Secretary of War, who were temporarily domiciled with their families in cottages on the grounds of the Home. I found Stanton reclining on the grass, playing with Lewis, one of his children (now living in New Orleans). He invited me to a seat on the greensward while he read the telegrams; and then, business being finished, we began talking of early times in Steubenville, Ohio, his native town and mine. One of us mentioned the game of "mumble-peg," and he asked me if I could play it. Of course I said yes, and he proposed that we should have a game then and there. Stanton entered into the spirit of the boyish sport with great zest, and for the moment all the perplexing questions of the terrible war were forgotten. I do not remember who won.

In the daily routine of the War Department, however, Stanton was intensely in earnest, and he required of every one else a like zeal and devotion and an utter sacrifice of self and of personal comfort whenever the interests of the Government were concerned. He hated disloyalty and had no patience with critics of his administration. Accordingly he was brusque and many times rude to newspaper men, members of Congress and others who applied to him for news or favors or who called upon him in support of claims that had already been rejected.

In contrast, Lincoln freely told to callers the contents of despatches from the armies, and there were some occasions on which he disclosed to the public in advance information relating to army manoeuvres of special importance, which leaked through to the enemy, with the

result of defeating our plans. So it came to pass that we were ordered by Secretary Stanton not to place in the cipher-drawer copies of despatches which told of expected army movements, or which related to actual or impending battles, until after he had first seen them; and in some instances the Secretary retained both copies to make sure their contents should not be prematurely published.

Lincoln's keen eyes soon discovered that there was something wrong in our attitude toward him, and without criticizing our course, he would ask us occasionally, with twinkling eyes, whether the Secretary of War did not have some later news. Of course we could not deceive him and he would then go to the adjoining room and ask Stanton if he had anything from the front. Sometimes he addressed Stanton as "Mars," but while the stern Secretary gave no indication of displeasure at this playful allusion to his official character, he did not, on the other hand, allow a smile to brighten his face.

L. E. Chittenden, in his "Reminiscences," page 186, says that at Lincoln's death Stanton uttered this eulogy at the bedside: "There lies the most perfect ruler of men the world has ever seen."

In August, 1865, Stanton left Washington for a few weeks' vacation, the first he had been permitted to take for five years. I accompanied him as cipher-operator. He visited Simeon Draper, Collector of the Port, and a Mr. Duer at New York, Isaac Bell at Tarrytown, a Mr. Minturn at the Highlands, New Jersey; Samuel Hooper at Boston, and John Hone at Newport. This respite was greatly enjoyed by Stanton. His death occurred December 24, 1869, not long after his protracted and bitter struggle with President Johnson, and at the very time that President Grant had offered him the much-coveted prize of a seat on the Supreme Court bench. He lived and died a relatively poor man. In the writer's opinion it is a nation's shame that his extraordinary services to his country in her time of stress and need have not been suitably recognized by the erection of a monument to his memory at the nation's capital. General McClellan has been so honored recently and at Richmond Jefferson Davis and Generals

Lee and Stuart are also remembered, but our great war secretary, to whom the country owes so much, has apparently been forgotten.

#### LINCOLN UNDER FIRE AT FORT STEVENS

TOWARD the end of June, 1864, General Lee detached a body of 20,000 men, including a large cavalry force, from the army defending Richmond and sent them North under the command of his chosen cavalry leader, General Jubal Early, for the purpose of making a quick dash into Maryland and then into Washington, if the capital were found to be insufficiently protected, as General Lee had heard was the case. This condition of imminent danger<sup>1</sup> really existed, as it is well known that but for the brave and heroic action of General Lew Wallace, in attacking Early at the mouth of the Monocacy with a force much smaller in number than that of the enemy, thus delaying Early's movements twenty-four hours, the latter might easily have reached and entered Washington before reinforcements could have arrived from Grant's army. Wallace's command consisted of 2700 troops, largely raw militia, and about 3300 veterans belonging to the Sixth Corps under General Ricketts, the latter having reached Baltimore from City Point only two days before.

The Monocacy fight was waged all day Saturday, July 9, and ended in Wallace's defeat, leaving Early free to resume his march upon Washington. Wallace sent this telegram to the War Department on Sunday, July 10: "I have been defeated. The enemy are not pressing me, from which I infer they are marching on Washington." This was indeed the fact, for Early's advance reached the District boundary line on Monday morning, and the signal officer wigwagged this sentence: "The enemy is within twenty rods of Fort Stevens." Early at once began a reconnaissance to learn the strength and disposition of our defenses and for two days kept up an

almost continuous firing which could be heard distinctly in Washington.

There was one considerable skirmish, witnessed by Lincoln, whose summer residence was only four miles from Fort Stevens, in a cottage at the Soldiers' Home. Lincoln visited the fortifications on Monday and Tuesday, and on several occasions was in great danger, one of our men having been killed within a few feet of where the President stood. His tall form must have been a conspicuous target for the enemy's sharpshooters, and it was a matter of remark at the time that he did not seem to realize the serious risk incurred in going to the front of our line while skirmishing was in progress. It is of historical importance to note that this was the first time (and up to the present the only time) when a President of the United States, although Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, has been exposed to the fire of the enemy's guns in battle. The total number of killed and wounded on both sides in the two days' skirmishes at the boundary line of the District of Columbia was nearly 1000.

While Lincoln witnessed the spirited skirmish with Early's troops in front of Fort Stevens on July 11, he carefully observed the whole situation of affairs and upon his return to the city he came direct to the War Department and gave us a pretty full account, which has been recorded by Mr. A. B. Chandler, as follows:

"I have in my possession the diagram which Lincoln made in the telegraph office, immediately after his return from his tour of the fortifications to the north and west of the city. This diagram showed the relative positions of the two bodies of troops and where the skirmish took place, all of which he explained to Major Eckert, Tinker, Bates and myself, who were, of course, extremely interested in his picturesque description."

For forty-eight hours, therefore, the coveted prize was within Early's grasp. Never before during the war had a Confederate army been within sight of the

<sup>1</sup> My war diary says:

July 10, 1864.—The enemy broke the railroad at Laurel to-day (11 miles out). Yesterday they seized a passenger train at Gunpowder Bridge, north of Baltimore, capturing Gen-

eral Franklin and staff, but they afterwards escaped.

July 11, 1864.—Great excitement in Washington. Department clerks are being armed and sent to the forts at the boundary.

glittering dome of the capitol and Early must have gnashed his teeth when he thought of his one day's delay at the Monocacy, which had been just long enough to allow veteran troops from Grant's army to reach Washington, for neither he nor his men failed to recognize on the parapets of our forts the well-known flags of the famous Sixth Corps, a part of which brave body of troops had fought him all day Saturday at the Monocacy. The remainder of this veteran corps, under General Wright, had landed at Seventh street wharf, Washington, on Sunday, at just about the hour at which Early's advance had come in sight of Fort Stevens.

With the dawn of Wednesday, however, it was discovered that Early had retreated, and Washington emerged from what is now known to have been one of its most serious crises during the whole war, for, as was said in an address in May, 1902, by Leslie M. Shaw (then Secretary of the Treasury), "with the national capital in the hands of the enemy it would have been impossible to prophesy the foreign complications, to say nothing of the demoralization of the people of the United States."

This was not the only time Early's fate belied his name, for three months later his army of raiders also lost one day's time in their calculations when Sheridan sent them whirling down the Valley of the Shenandoah after their initial victory during his temporary absence in Washington.

#### LINCOLN'S STRANGE FOREBODINGS REGARDING HIS REELECTION IN 1864

IN these peaceful days, more than forty years after the close of the Civil War, when we read of the fraternization of the Blue and the Gray at Army Reunions, South and North, and Republican Presidents are enthusiastically welcomed by the people of the South, it is somewhat difficult to recall clearly the troublous times of 1864, that most critical and momentous year of the war, and harder still to realize that there was so much of doubt in the minds of the Northern people, and even of our chosen leaders, as to the ultimate outcome of the struggle. Our great War President himself, whose heroic faith

voiced itself so often in his public utterances, was in his heart more or less of a doubter at critical times, as the writer can bear certain witness. He seemed to recognize more clearly than some of his advisers the great anti-war feeling in the North and the underlying forces back of it, and the weight of their subtle and malign influence.

I consider 1864 the most critical and momentous year of the war from a military standpoint, although in that year we had no Bull Run defeat as in 1861, nor Chickahominy disaster as in 1862, nor Gettysburg nor Vicksburg victories as in 1863. The year was remarkable also in political movements. The sorehead convention at Cleveland in May had nominated Frémont and Cochrane, both from New York, forgetful of the Constitutional provision against taking both the President and the Vice-President from the same State. At that nondescript gathering a letter from Wendell Phillips, the abolitionist leader, was read in which he said:

The administration therefore I regard as a civil and military failure and its avowed policy ruinous to the North in every point of view. If Mr. Lincoln is reelected, I do not expect to see the Union reconstructed in my day unless on terms more disastrous to liberty than even disunion would be.

#### LINCOLN DID NOT FAVOR JOHNSON FOR VICE-PRESIDENT

ON June 8, 1864, the Republican convention at Baltimore unanimously renominated Lincoln for President. Horace White, who had formerly been employed as a clerk in Secretary Stanton's office, was in the convention, but was then engaged in newspaper work, was seated next to the operator who was working the wire leading to the War Department, and sent the first congratulatory message to Lincoln, and shortly afterward telegraphed that Andrew Johnson of Tennessee had been nominated for Vice-President. When the President reached the telegraph office, my colleague, Mr. Tinker, offered his congratulations, but was told that Lincoln had not yet seen the message announcing his renomination. When the copy was shown him he said: "Send it right over to the Madam. She will be more interested

than I am."<sup>1</sup> When the announcement of Johnson's nomination was handed to the President, he looked at the telegram a moment and then said, "Well, I thought possibly he might be the man; perhaps he is the best man, but—" and rising from his chair he walked out of the room. Mr. Tinker has always contended from this incident that Lincoln preferred that Hannibal Hamlin should have been placed on the ticket a second time, and expected that he would be.

As one straw showing how the wind of opinion then veered toward McClellan, it is noted that only two days before Lincoln recorded his remarkable estimate, hereinafter given, the soldiers and attendants at Carver Hospital, Washington, in a State election, had cast an unusually large vote—one in three—against the administration. This otherwise trivial incident must have exerted a special influence on Mr. Lincoln, in view of the fact that he had frequently visited that hospital and mingled with its occupants. Nor must we forget that the exponents of peace-at-any-price were still firing their sputtering squibs at Lincoln, which irritated although they probably did not much hurt.

The general effect of these eccentric peace movements, however, was to foster among certain classes in the North a feeling of unrest and of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war. Such persons no doubt believed they were patriots, but they had no backbone, and events not turning out as they wished, they were too ready to cast the blame upon the Administration,—on the one hand upon Stanton, the Bismarck of our Civil War, who was the personification of zeal and implacable fury in his treatment of his country's enemies, whether North or South, and on the other hand, without logic or reason, upon Lincoln, who had "malice toward none; with charity for all," but who also had "firmness to do the right," no matter if his best friends and legal advisers were against him.

Lincoln, as James Russell Lowell eulogized him in his Harvard Commemoration Ode in July, 1865,

The kindly, earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,

Lincoln, silent under the stings of criticism, but with almost sublime faith in the final success of the cause of liberty, of which he was the great exponent, appears in 1864, as we now see him in his environment, to have become imbued with the idea that perhaps, after all, the people of the North would declare themselves at the polls in November as being willing to end the bloody war by putting McClellan in the Presidential chair and thus pave the way for an amendment to the Constitution which would permit the Southern States to withdraw peacefully from the Union and set up a separate government, with negro slavery as its corner-stone. Lincoln, with his lofty ideas of eternal right and justice between man and man, whether white, black, red or yellow, had, it seemed, almost lost heart, and his long-tried patience was nearly exhausted. He was indeed almost at the parting of the ways as he saw so many of his own political party and former supporters wavering or actually deserting the colors and opposing the Government in the very matters which to him were vital. They had turned back from their march up freedom's heights, the topmost peaks of which he had already scaled, and from which only, as he believed, could be had clear visions of the controlling questions of his day and generation. To him those visions and what they meant to his country were sublime verities, as indeed they later came to be to most or all of his countrymen.

Hear what Senator Morgan of Alabama said in 1895: "The character of Lincoln is not yet known to this generation as it will be to those who shall live in later centuries. They will see, as we cannot yet perceive, the full maturity of his wisdom, in its actual effects upon the destinies of two great races of men."

But at the time of which I am now writing—October, 1864—with the waves of civil war beating ceaselessly upon him, with the snarling tones of his political enemies sounding in his ears, with

<sup>1</sup> My comrade, Mr. Chandler, says that Lincoln made exactly the same remark on the night of November 8, when the news that came over the wires was such as to make it quite certain that Lincoln had been reëlected.



the continual nagging of those who professed to be his friends, but who criticized his words and actions from their lowly habitat in the slough of despond, with such meager disappointing results from the Emancipation Proclamation, the general features of which had been announced two years before, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that Lincoln feared defeat in the approaching November election.

In his great anxiety Lincoln had sent John Hay, one of his secretaries, on a special mission to Hilton Head, South Carolina, with instructions to General Gillmore, commanding, to coöperate in certain measures intended to aid in bringing Florida back into the Union, on the lines of his Reconstruction Proclamation of December 8, 1863, the program being to extend the Union lines as far as possible into that State and induce the loyal citizens to set up a reorganized State government with its three electoral votes for the Administration at the November election. This plan, if under more fortunate conditions it could have succeeded, was rendered futile by the wholly unexpected defeat of General Truman Seymour at the battle of Olustee.

John G. Nicolay, his first secretary, was despatched to Missouri with a view to overcoming factional troubles in that State, kept alive by political leaders of strong contrary types, and thus to secure if possible her eleven electoral votes, which in Lincoln's estimate, as we shall see, were conceded to McClellan, but which were actually cast for Lincoln.

In October, Maryland had voted upon her new constitution, the chief feature of which was the final extinction of slavery; and out of a total of 60,000 votes the majority in favor of the new law was a bare 375, and that result had been carried to the Court of Appeals on the theory that the vote of the soldiers in the field could not legally be counted.

The Pennsylvania, Ohio and other State elections took place on October 11, only two days before the incident I am about to describe. On that evening Lincoln stayed in the telegraph office until after midnight for the purpose of receiving promptly the results of the elections—his last message being as follows:

*Washington, Oct. 11, 1864.*

GENERAL SIMON CAMERON,  
Philadelphia:

Am leaving office to go home. How does it stand now?

*A. Lincoln.*

Cameron's reply was hopeful but not conclusive. The following day Grant telegraphed to the War Department for news of the Pennsylvania election. Lincoln being in the telegraph office when the despatch was received, answered it thus:

October 12, 1864.

LIEUT. GENL. GRANT,  
City Point, Va.:

Pennsylvania very close and still in doubt on home vote.

*A. Lincoln.*

LINCOLN'S AUTOGRAPHIC ESTIMATE OF  
THE ELECTORAL VOTE.

SUCH in general were the conditions throughout the country as they appeared to Lincoln when on the evening of October 13, 1864, he made his regular visit to the War Department telegraph office, which for over three anxious years had been his safe retreat and lounging place, and where he had so often calculated the wavering chances of war and peace. Major Eckert and the cipher-operators were all there and we could not fail to notice that the President looked unusually weary and depressed as he sat down to scan the political field and consider the probabilities of his reelection, three weeks later.

After the results of the State elections two days before had been fully discussed, the conversation begun by him turned to the Presidential election, and he expressed himself as not being at all sure of reelection. He referred to special conditions in some of the States as affording ground for the fear that McClellan might slip through. In fact his cautious spirit led him to underrate his own strength and to exaggerate McClellan's chances, and after pondering the matter a short while, he reached for one of our cipher telegraph-blanks and wrote his own careful estimate of the electoral vote as shown by the facsimile here published for the first time.

He entered in one column the names

Office U. S. Military Telegraph

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington, D. C. Oct 13<sup>th</sup> 1864

Supposed Copperhead Vote.	Union Vote for President
New York 33	New England States 39
Penn 26	Mississippi 8
New Jersey 7	Wisconsin 8
Delaware 3	Minnesota 4
Maryland 7	Iowa 8
Michigan 11	Oregon 3
Kentucky 11	California 5
Illinois 16	Kansas 3
114	Indiana 15
	Ohio 21
	W. Virginia 5
	117
	Nevada 3
	120

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FACSIMILE OF LINCOLN'S AUTOGRAPHIC ESTIMATE OF THE  
ELECTORAL VOTE OF 1864

The original autograph, now owned by the author of this series, was written by Lincoln in the War Department telegraph office, October 13, 1864, three weeks before the election, and is here printed for the first time. The headings: "Supposed Copperhead Vote" and "Union Vote for President," as well as the addition of "Nevada," with "3" votes, and the corrected total "120," are in the handwriting of Major Eckert.

of the eight States which he conceded to McClellan, giving him 114 electoral votes. In a second column he entered the names of the States which he felt sure would cast 117 votes for the Administration. This total showed only three more votes than he allowed McClellan. He did this from memory, making no mistake in the number of electoral votes to which each State was entitled, excepting that he omitted Nevada, which was about to come into the Union, and her three votes were added in Eckert's handwriting. (The President's proclamation admitting Nevada is dated October 31, 1864.)

It will hardly be believed to-day that Lincoln should have allowed himself in

his calculation so narrow a margin as three votes out of 231, but the evidence is absolute.

The actual result of the election was of course very different from Lincoln's figures. McClellan received only twenty-one votes, two of the three States, Delaware and Kentucky, being original slave States, the other being New Jersey. Lincoln received 212 votes instead of his estimate of 117. In 1860 he had received 180.

Those who are familiar with Lincoln's written papers will not be surprised at the neatness of this memorandum in his own handwriting, which shows no erasure or blot, every word being legible, although in the lapse of time some of

his pencil marks have become somewhat blurred and indistinct. It was his custom when writing a note or making a memorandum, as the cipher-operators had observed, to take his pen or pencil in hand, smooth out the sheet of paper carefully and write slowly and deliberately, stopping at times in thoughtful mood to look out of the window for a moment or two, and then resuming his writing. In this respect he was wholly different from Secretary Stanton, whose drafts or letters and memoranda were jotted down at a terrific pace, with many erasures and interlineations.

I still have in my possession the original draft (partly in my handwriting) of Stanton's General Orders to the army, dated April 15, 1865, announcing the death of the President, which is so full of corrections in his own bold hand as to be almost unreadable; but all of Mr. Lincoln's papers, written by himself, were models of neatness and accuracy.

It is of more than passing interest to note that at the very time Lincoln was setting down his conservative estimate of the political situation and the trend of Northern opinion adverse to his administration, Jacob Thompson, the Confederate agent in Canada, wrote to Jefferson Davis that in his opinion "the reflection of Lincoln is almost certain." Thompson's letter in cipher, dated Clifton, Canada, October 13, 1864, reached the War Department at the hands of Thompson's messenger (who was also in our secret service), on Sunday, October 16, and was translated by the cipher-operators.<sup>1</sup>

#### WHY LINCOLN LOST CONFIDENCE

Lincoln's fears proved to have been unfounded and were no doubt the result of peculiar circumstances and conditions operating upon an anxious mind normally disposed to introspection. Let us, if we can, imagine his thoughts at this period of his sore depression. We may suppose

<sup>1</sup> See General Eckert's testimony at the trial of the conspirators, compiled by Pitman, page 42. See also *THE CENTURY* for June, 1907, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> John Hay, in his essay on "Franklin in France," recently published, says of the reception of that treaty:

"It was the sunburst to the colonies after a troubled dawn. The tattered and frost-bitten soldiers of Valley Forge were paraded to receive the

that his mind reverted to Valley Forge at the crucial hour of the Revolution, before February, 1778, when news came of the alliance between France and the United States which had been secured through the influence of Franklin, the patriot and philosopher.<sup>2</sup>

Now, in 1864, at what probably seemed to Lincoln the crucial hour of our Republic, he no doubt reflected upon the ambitious efforts of Napoleon III to set up a monarchy upon our Southwestern borders by means of French bayonets in contrast to the generous act of Louis the Sixteenth in signing a "treaty of universal peace and true friendship," which should bind his heirs and successors.

Without doubt Lincoln also dwelt seriously upon the awful sacrifice of human life in the conduct of the war, and particularly upon Grant's sanguinary struggle in the Wilderness, with Richmond still uncaptured; and he may well have wondered whether the people of the North might not be weary of the deluge of blood, with no stoppage of the flow in sight. David R. Locke (*Petroleum V. Nasby*) in his "Reminiscences" says of Lincoln in 1864:

He was as tender hearted as a child. He asked me if the masses of the people held him in any way responsible for the loss of their friends in the Army.

Lincoln doubtless thought of the desertion of his standard by some of his own former supporters and of the lukewarmness of others; of the many unjust criticisms of his policy in the newspapers, and of their slurs and falsehoods which he was powerless to answer or combat. Truly, like the Saviour, he had "endured the contradiction of sinners." And we must remember also that Lincoln was possessed of a natural melancholy, a morbid tendency to take undue blame upon himself when subjected to criticism. All things then being considered, it is perhaps not so very strange that on that joyful news, . . . and shouted, 'Long live the King of France!' Washington issued a general order saying 'It had pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe propitiously to defend the cause of the United American States, and by finally raising up a powerful friend among the nations of the earth to establish our liberty and independence upon a lasting foundation.' This act of France gave us a standing abroad which we had hitherto lacked."—*THE CENTURY* for January, 1906.

evening of October 13, 1864, in his accustomed seat at Major Eckert's desk in the War Department telegraph office, he should have been ready to give up the ship if God so willed it. But God did not so will it, for on the night of November 8, 1864, he received the welcome news of his reëlection while in the War Department telegraph office, where only three weeks before he was almost ready to concede McClellan's election. He was not unduly elated at the glad result, but serene and dignified, and was still mindful of the feelings of others, as is shown in the closing part of his speech to the assembled multitude on that most eventful occasion, so often quoted, but well worth repeating in this connection:

So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom. While I am deeply sensible to the high compliment of reëlection, and duly grateful, as I trust, to Almighty God for having directed my countrymen to a right conclusion, as I think for their own good, it adds nothing to

my satisfaction that any other man may be disappointed or pained by the result. May I ask those who have not differed with me to join with me in this same spirit towards those who have.

#### LINCOLN'S HUMOROUS CHARACTERIZATION OF A SIGNATURE.

ON one occasion an official letter was received from John Wintrup, the operator at Wilmington, Delaware, on the route of the military line from Washington to Fort Monroe. Wintrup is still living in Philadelphia. His signature was written in a rather bold hand with the final letter quite large, almost like a capital, and ending in flourishes which partly obscured the name itself. Lincoln's eye dropped on this letter as it lay on the cipher-desk, and after satisfying his curiosity as to the peculiar signature he said: "That reminds me of a short-legged man in a big overcoat, the tail of which was so long that it wiped out his footprints in the snow."

#### A DUPLICATE OF WINTRUP'S SIGNATURE

I have recently received a letter from my friend Wintrup in the ordinary course of business, from which the facsimile signature here shown was taken.—D. H. B.

## TWO CAPTIVES

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

**M**OURN not for him: he doth no captive dwell  
Who beats and gnaws the bars that bind him so,  
Who, thrice immured, still hates his cage too well.

But pity him who no such pangs can know,  
Who, long-enchained, and grown to love his cell,  
Should Freedom lean to him, stands loath to go.